

### *Health Officials Address Community Leaders on the H1N1 Virus*

Las Cruces, NM — On Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, Congressman Harry Teague led a group of federal, state and local officials in an H1N1 Preparedness Workshop at Zia Middle School in Las Cruces. Over 30 community, business and healthcare leaders attended the presentation focused on swine flu education and county coordination. The panel, comprised of HHS Regional Administrator Dr. Epi Elizondo, NM Dept. of Health Public Information Officer Chris Minnick, NM Dept. of Health Nurse Epidemiologist Patricia Frank and Director of LCPS Health Services, Beverly Hine, discussed topics including H1N1 prevention, detection and new vaccine developments.

The workshop also included opportunities to work through real world scenarios and formulate responses in an effort to develop a comprehensive, coordinated H1N1 action plan for Dona Ana County. The community can now utilize this plan to prevent the spread of the virus and react to any outbreaks if necessary.

“To prepare for H1N1 we must do two things: educate and coordinate. Education is critical in preventing the spread of the virus and guiding people’s reaction while a coordinated response allows us to take action on a virus of this magnitude,” said Congressman Harry Teague. “Today, we worked together to ensure Dona Ana County has a comprehensive plan to battle this virus by engaging all levels of government and community leaders in an in depth discussion.”

Last week, New Mexico's Department of Health reported 12 H1N1 related deaths and over 200 cases were hospitalized throughout the state.

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